



Alternative Format Options to Accommodate All Students

There are many alternative forms of communication for both audio and visual communication. For the hearing impaired, alternatives might be sign language or computer programs. For the blind, alternatives might be Braille or audio tape or a reader. For people with visual, learning, or cognitive disabilities, print materials can be a significant barrier.

The following table outlines the pros and cons to alternative formats when accommodating all students.

Impairments	Formats	Pros	Cons
Visual	Large Print	Provides access for many persons with low vision	Long documents may cause eye strain.
	Braille	Good for complex information, short reference materials (less than 10 pages), and for information that is referred to repeatedly such as meeting agendas	Only 10 percent of individuals who are blind read Braille. Documents in Braille are bulky and heavy.
Visual and Mobility	Audio recording	Popular format that can be accessed and stored easily and conveniently Eliminates the need to manipulate a publication	If materials are long or complex, audio recordings present the information in one dimension that is difficult to reread, scan, or use as a reference source. Audio tapes do not always illuminate word spelling or format of the text. Difficult to communicate large tables or complicated graphics/illustrations.
Visual, Mobility and Hearing	Electronic	Users can access text on diskette or through online resources using adaptive devices such as Braille display, speech output, Braille printing, large-screen magnification or adaptive keyboard designs. Easy and compact storage Easy to use as a reference document	Users must have access to a computer, be equipped with a modem (for online resources) and have adaptive devices. Many software interfaces are graphically based or use point-and-click menus for accessing the information. Braille translation software and speech output devices cannot access this type of information.